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The Arizona
BEEHIVE
Magazine

Serving Arizona Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Dedicated!



ON THE COVER

A renovated and open Mesa Arizona Temple. Photo by Kary Ann Hoopes

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AN OASIS IN THE DESERT:

The Mesa Temple is DEDICATED

By Emily Jex Boyle

The words on the beautiful, colorful invitation read simply, "Come and See."

In the weeks leading up to the Mesa Temple Open House, our family embraced the exciting, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to share a local, historical icon. As a family, we invited friends, neighbors and co-workers to come and see.

My husband and I volunteered as tour guides together at the temple open house. As parents of young children, we were grateful for the time to serve together in the temple for a few weeks. We en-

joyed the camaraderie with fellow tour guides and ushers. We marveled at individual opportunities to experience the temple with family, friends, neighbors, church leaders, media representatives and complete strangers, walking across beautiful grounds, down majestic hallways and through awe-inspiring rooms. In all, about 347,000 people attended the open house, according to a Church press release. On Saturday, November 20, 2021, the final visitors to the Mesa Temple Open House

passed through the temple. That last night was electric. The anticipation of the dedication was tangible.

On Sunday, December 12, 2021, during the second dedicatory session of the Mesa Temple, President Nelson shared a message, pre-recorded. He reminded those in attendance that the building of temples is nothing new and that the presence of temples strengthens the power and influence of God on the earth. He also pointed out that even in times of poverty and

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WHAT'S THE BUZZ?

SOCIALLY CLOSE

Social Media. The term either delights or repulses, it seems. President Nelson and other Church leaders have at times asked Members to shun its use for periods of time, instead focusing on the scriptures or other wholesome activities. As with all media, social media can be used for good or not-so-good.

The Arizona Beehive Magazine posts to Instagram and Facebook to reach our readers. The Prophet recognizes the good that comes from wholesome social media use, and encourages its use to gather Israel. He made the following Twitter, Facebook and Instagram post on the first day of this new year, offering a few suggestions for those making New Year's resolutions:

"First, resolve to strengthen your spiritual foundation. This may involve setting a specific time and place to study the scriptures, praying more often, making temple worship a bigger priority, and letting God prevail in all aspects of your life.

"Second, resolve to be kind to others. When the Savior Jesus Christ visited the Americas, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, one of the first things He taught was the need to eliminate contention in our lives. So, please be compassionate, be understanding, be slow to judge, and be quick to forgive.

"Third, resolve to be resolute. The Lord loves effort. The Lord loves consistency. The Lord loves steadfastness. While we surely will come up short from time to time, our persistent efforts to hear Him and follow the inspiration He gives us will help us to 'wax strong in the Spirit' (Mosiah 18:26)."

Strengthen spiritual foundation: check!

Be kind to others: check!

Be resolute: check!

I can do each of these things as I follow our prophet. And I did not have to wait until the next issue of the Liahona or until the next session of General Conference to hear from President Nelson. There he is, instantly, on my mobile device! Now that's what I call using social media for good...



In our current socially distanced world, good wholesome social media keeps us socially close. And for that I am thankful. Thank you for reading...

Michael O'Brien
Publisher



Photo courtesy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Photo courtesy of Deseret News



Photo from Adobe Stock

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The Mesa Temple is Dedicated
Continued from pg. 2

persecution, temples were a priority to the Lord and His people. President Nelson said that temples are the “only place on earth to receive all of God’s promises” and they have “never been more precious, a retreat from pressures and contentions of the world, a place to rejuvenate and refresh.” He testified of the power of temples to transform life at any age, to increase our ability to repent and forgive, of the truths and blessings available in temples unavailable anywhere else. He invited parents to bring children to the temple ground, to help “prepare them to enter the temple someday.”

Elder Piper added, “This morning, we all turned on a faucet and likely thought little of the blessing, or of the Hohokam [who built the ancient canals of Mesa]. As the current drought reminds us, we can’t take access to water for granted. The world is suffering from a great drought. The temple is an oasis in a hot, arid, secular world.”

Elder Piper shared the fitting scripture from Isaiah:

“For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.”

Elder Gerrit W. Gong, during the same session, testified, “The temple is a well of living water for all who thirst.”

In a hymn composed by President Nelson nine years ago, the choir sang these touching words at the dedication: “Our joy is full, our song so gladsome”

Sister Dottie Layton, assistant to the Temple Matron, quoted President Nelson, who taught, “The temple lies at the heart of strengthening our faith. Everything taught in the temple increases our understanding of Christ.” She con-

tinued, “As we keep covenants, God strengthens us and we leave the temple like flowing, living water, refreshing our community with kindness, generosity, goodness and light.”

In 1945, the first non-English ordinances were offered in the Mesa Temple. Spanish speaking sessions drew brothers and sisters from Mexico, South and Central America to their

nearest temple in Mesa, Arizona. When speaking of Mesa as a gathering place for these saints during the dedication, Elder Piper assured, “Their stories can fill volumes.”

Growing up, my dad always spoke highly of his friends from Arizona he met in college. “They were so much

Continued on pg. 7



Photo by Kary Ann Hoopes

In October 1927, Heber J. Grant, then the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, traveled to Arizona to dedicate the seventh temple. In the prayer, President Grant pled to God:

“May Thy peace ever abide in this holy building, that all who come here may partake of the spirit of peace, and of the sweet and heavenly influence that Thy Saints have experienced in other temples, may all who come upon the grounds which surround this temple, whether members of the Church of Christ or not, feel the sweet and peaceful influence of this blessed and hallowed spot.”

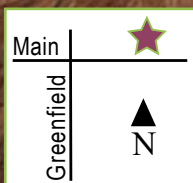
These words were repeated as part of the 2021 rededication prayer.

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The Mesa Temple is Dedicated
Continued from pg. 5

fun,” he’d say. This thought comes to mind as I imagine the busloads of saints who traveling to Mesa to attend the temple. Families opened their homes and hearts. Elder Gong recently called the warm hospitality Mesa saints showed their fellow brothers and sisters during these decades, “a wonderful tradition.”

A common phrase repeated through the decades of saints departing to traveling from Mexico and

Central America was “Hasta Mesa,” or in other words, “See you in Mesa,” or “Until we meet in Mesa.” With the doors of the temple open again, saints of the Mesa Temple District are able to echo the same, traveling a much shorter distance to the temple: “Hasta Mesa!”

In 1975, Spencer W. Kimball, the president of the Church then, closed and refurbished the temple. The temple was rededicated.

Over seven thousand individuals

came to the temple for three rededication sessions. These sessions were also streamed to 29 local stake centers of the temple district. The Mesa Temple is the seventh operating temple and first in Arizona. There are currently more than 250 temples around the world either in operation, under construction or announced.

During this past Christmas season, I met a young couple downtown who had moved into an apartment near the

temple. They hadn’t heard about the Temple Christmas lights or the yearly Easter pageant. I assured them they’d moved into a great location and the heart of the city. They assured me they love the holidays. I’m confident it won’t be too hard for them to come and see. They’re in for a treat!

Visit www.mesatemple.org for more information about the Mesa Temple and events at the Visitors Center and Temple Grounds.



Photo by Kary Ann Hoopes

During the dedicatory session, Elder Gerrit W. Gong testified, “The temple is a well of living water for all who thirst.”



Dedication morning, December 12, 2021. Photo by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.



Celestial Room Photo by Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

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Check out these five great family activities for under \$25 per person - AND they're close to home!

By Merry Gordon

#1 VNSA Book Sale:

Saturday, Feb. 12 – Sunday, Feb. 13, at 1826 W McDowell Road in Phoenix. Admission is free, though Arizona State Fairgrounds charges a parking fee. Bring a bag (or a cart!) to enjoy thousands of used books at low prices during this all-day event. The VNSA Book Sale supports the Volunteer Nonprofit Service Association, which gives back to local nonprofits. In addition to books, games, puzzles and music are among the secondhand offerings at this popular annual event. Visit vnsabook-sale.org/ for more information, a list of rare books on offer and map/layout of the event.



Photo courtesy of VNSA Book Sale

The VNSA Book Sale is staffed by passionate volunteers and draws thousands each year.

#2 10th Annual Mesa Marathon:

Saturday, Feb. 12, in Mesa. This event offers a 6:30 AM marathon (a USATF-certified marathon that serves as a qualifier for the Boston Marathon), a half marathon, a 10K and a Kids 1K, which begins at noon. While registration for the more challenging courses starts at \$40, the Kids 1K is free and so is cheering on the runners! All children will receive a bib, t-shirt and finisher ribbon. Visit mesamarathon.com for info.



Photo via Pixabay

Little runners can enjoy a free 1K for kids at the Mesa Marathon.



Photo via Pixabay

Enjoy gourmet olive oil and live music at Queen Creek Olive Mill.

#3 Live Music at the Queen Creek Olive Mill:

Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 6 – 9 PM at Queen Creek Olive Mill, 25062 S Meridian Road in Queen Creek. Admission is free, but food and beverages are available for purchase. Offering an assortment of gourmet olive oils, vinegars, sauces, stuffed olives, spa products and more, the Queen Creek Olive Mill hosts local musicians every weekend evening. Visit www.queencreekolivemill.com/ for more information and links to shopping, recipes and venue information.



Photo via Pixabay

See the majestic Arabian horses at Scottsdale's Arabian Horse Show.

#4 Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show:

The Wild West goes upscale for this big annual event! Doors open at 8 AM with \$15 general admission from Feb. 17 – 27 at WestWorld of Scottsdale, 16601 N. Pima Road. Children 12 and under are free. Friday, Feb. 25, is a free family fun night, and admission is free for veterans on Tuesday, Feb. 22. Watch the majestic Arabian horses on display while you enjoy educational events, vendor booths and an international cuisine court. Visit scottsdaleshow.com for more information and tickets.

#5 67th Annual Parada del Sol Parade & Trail's End Festival:

Ready to get back in the saddle this year? Scottsdale's Parada del Sol features bands, live musical entertainment, food and merchandise vendors on Saturday, Feb. 5, at 10 AM in Old Town Scottsdale. The post-parade festival runs from noon to 5 PM with a 7 – 10 PM street concert to follow. The parade is free and expected to be enjoyed by some 30,000 people this year. Visit <https://scottsdaleparade.com/> for more information.



Photo via Pxhere

Postponed in 2021, Scottsdale's Parada del Sol is back this year.

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Photo via Pixabay

Children will love the new Gospel for Kids channel on YouTube.

By RuthAnn Hogue

Subscribe!

New Gospel for Kids YouTube Channel

love. We hope this new resource for children will bless them with a confirmation that their Heavenly Father knows and loves them.”

The post included an invitation to “subscribe to the channel and share these videos with children you know.” As of press time, more than 17,000 parents, children and auxiliary leaders had taken her up on the offer.

The new gospel-oriented YouTube channel includes playlists such as Bible Stories for Kids, The Covenant Path, Friend to Friend, and Come Draw with Me.

The app, available since early 2021 for iOS and Android devices, is rated for kids ages 4+, although it is made for kids ages 6–8. The app includes coloring books, sing-along videos featuring favorites from the Children’s Songbook and scripture stories.

Multiple press and social media announcements aside, many members—including those contacted by *The Arizona Beehive*—said they were unaware of both the Gospel for Kids

mobile app and YouTube channel.

Laura Castenada, an assistant front end manager for Kroger Foods, was among those thrilled to learn about the new resources.

“Although we are new to the channel, we all enjoy it as a family,” said Castenada, a mother of seven (plus two bonus children), who lives in the Maricopa Eldorado Ward in the Maricopa Arizona Stake. “I feel that this channel promotes family bonding and helps small children with daily devotionals in a fun way. ‘A family that prays and plays together stays together.’”

In addition, Castenada said the resources will help her keep her family on the covenant path.

“I feel this helps me as a parent because I am able to spend time with my children doing things they enjoy and making wholesome memories. I don’t have to worry about the worldly struggles of profanities as videos are very wholesome and help put my mind to ease,” she said.

“The Gospel for Kids YouTube channel and activities on the app could be used in church and at home, or any time. “It’s a positive influence anytime

for the family,” she said.

Other Arizona parents and leaders agreed.

Sally Sierra, a full-time mother of four children, serves as the first counselor in the Primary presidency of Mountain View Ward in Tucson West Stake. “I love that there is already a video to introduce children to the Old Testament,” she noted. “I hope there are more videos added to help with Come, Follow Me study for next year.”

The new channel is a great resource for grandparents, parents, leaders and kids. <https://www.youtube.com/c/GospelForKids>



Photo courtesy of Laura Castaneda

Laura Castaneda, a single mother of seven who lives in Maricopa, recommends Gospel for Kids, a new channel on YouTube published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

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The Best New Year's Resolution Ever

By Lin Sue Cooney

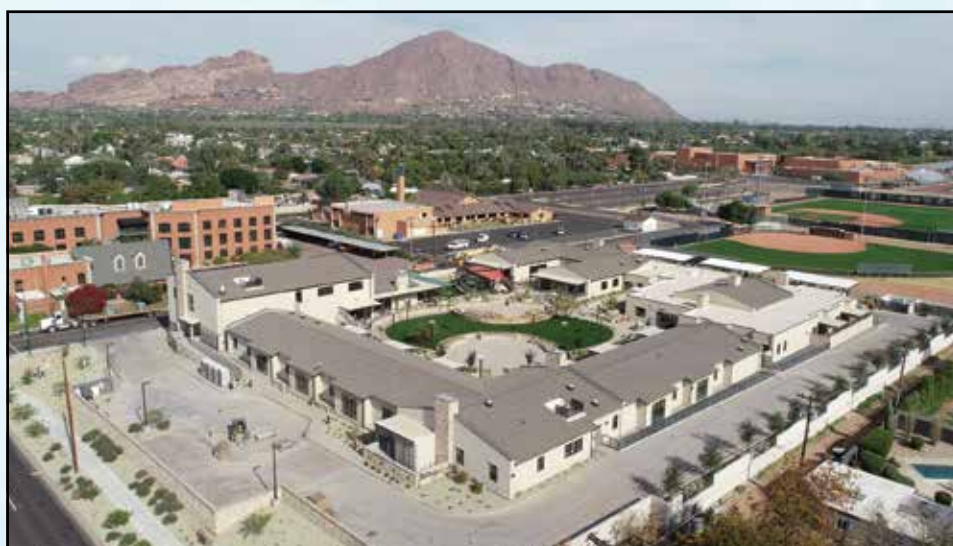
As we say goodbye to 2021 and embark on a fresh new start in 2022, perhaps you're thinking of making a New Year's resolution. Will it be a new exercise routine? Healthier diet? Or how about sharing your time and talent with

someone you've never met before, who needs a warm smile and a tender touch?

Opening soon, Hospice of the Valley's innovative Dementia Care and Education Campus, at 44th Street and Indianola Avenue in Phoenix, will serve people and their family members



Photo courtesy Hospice of the Valley
Patient TS Aubrey and college Volunteer.



Dementia Care and Education Campus, November 2021.

Photo courtesy Hospice of the Valley



Dementia Care and Education Campus, November 2021.

Photo courtesy Hospice of the Valley

who are living with all types of dementia. From the earliest stages to the most advanced, loved ones and their caregivers receive compassionate support and education to help ease what can be a lengthy and challenging journey.

A big component of this beautiful care comes from volunteers who visit with patients and families.

We invite you to join our volunteer family and truly change lives with your companionship, conversation and laughter.

Volunteer Gretchen Surridge fell in love with dementia patients after caring for her own father. "I love the sweetness I see in them. I enjoy the challenge of finding a way to break through and get to the person who is still there. They are not the same, but they are still there. It's gratifying to unlock their happy memories. They have a whole life story, and I want to tap into that."

There are many rewarding ways to volunteer — from storytelling, art, dance, games and reading to nature walks around the beautiful campus courtyard. Med student Jia Kai Pan, enjoys soothing families with his violin. "It amazes me how music can open someone's heart," he says. "I see them perk up and turn towards me — and sometimes, even the ones who don't really speak anymore start to sing."

The Dementia Care and Education Campus has a special need for volunteers with professional talents

— licensed/certified hair stylists, nail artists and yoga instructors who enjoy pampering someone with a relaxing experience that lifts or calms the spirit.

Volunteer Debi Wineroth sees how people light up when she trims or styles their hair: "They sit taller in their wheelchairs or smile and stare at themselves in the mirror. There's something special about putting caring hands on someone and taking them back to a time when life was more normal and they felt beautiful. I'm so grateful to give them that bit of dignity."

Lynn Tolmachoff is a longtime volunteer manager with Hospice of the Valley. "Our volunteers are so diverse, but they all provide that one-on-one support to our patients, meeting them where they are," she says. "They help redirect someone who may be confused, they reassure someone who is distressed, and they bring indescribable joy to someone who only knows how to live in the present. They are a true gift."

So as we look forward to a brand new year, perhaps we'll see you at the campus. We'll recognize you by the smile on your face and the love in your heart!

To volunteer at the Dementia Care and Education Campus or with Hospice of the Valley, contact Angela Hoffer at ahoffer@hov.org or (602) 739-4717. It may be one of the most fulfilling things you ever do!

Lin Sue Cooney is Community Engagement director at Hospice of the Valley. To learn about programs and volunteer opportunities, visit hov.org.

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Lin Sue,
Director of Community Engagement

Between the Lines

A New Podcast for Writers & Readers

By Allison Beckert

Between The Lines: The Inside Scoop for Adoring Fans and Aspiring Authors, is the newest platform for some of the finest voices in clean romance and fiction. This crack team of authors share their friendship, expertise and interests with listeners for a peek into the minds of authors. While they are united in many of their interests, each shows off facets that make this group feel like a first-string team.

At the core of the podcast are Sarah M. Eden, Traci Hunter Abramson, Esther Hatch and Sian Ann Bessey. In the first episodes, they introduce each other with hilarious (and apparently very accurate!) bios and a little about how they started and kept writing. Creativity isn't easy to maintain alone, and their candid discussion is a hope-filled and encouraging voice for readers and writers. Between them, they have a list of awards a mile long for their works. Their talents are recognized across a dozen competitions and they hold their own among accomplished romance writers, lending their individual leanings of suspense,

historical and period fiction.

Episodes so far include discussions on features of writing, author life, and sometimes fangirling about their favorite things like good readers do...a lot like their loyal readers do about their award-winning books! For lovers of the clean romance genre and readers looking for authors who are members of the Church, the guests on the podcast are a highlight reel of award-winning writers with works on the shelves, ready for a read. Some names already in their guest list include Sarah McConkie, Josi Kilpack and Regina Jennings.

Between the Lines episodes launched for public listening in July of 2021, with the first few episodes setting a playful tone with the friendly group. For fans of their work, it's a kind of meeting of the greats and a companionable crossover not to be missed. For those new to their writing, it's an accessible and pleasant party to join, even without a background in their work.

The podcast is produced by Covenant Communications and has their stamp of professionalism and excellence from the start. Each episode is



Photo by Melea Nelson 2021

Holding one another's books are: (top) Esther Hatch, Traci Hunter Abramson, (bottom) Sian Ann Bessey, and Sarah M. Eden.

an easy listening breeze of 10 to 20 minutes—not a difficult ask for any listener, even those new to podcasts or new to these authors.

Aspiring authors, romance lovers, clean book lovers and existing fans of the authors will enjoy this podcast as it has something to offer for each group. As the podcast's episodes progress, look forward to guest authors who can stretch your reading list and expand your shelf to still more excellent books

within your comfort level and interest. Even if romance or writing isn't your line, the podcast makes for a fun listen. On a rough day, it can just be a nice time to sit down and share a few minutes with friendly ladies with a shared creative passion. Their enthusiasm and light will inspire and uplift and comes through every episode.

Episodes are available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher or anywhere podcasts are available.

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Relationships

The Importance of Expressions of Love

By Heather Sandstrom

I remember hearing the sweetest talk by Elder Richard G. Scott about the importance of expressions of love. He would open his scriptures to give a message in a meeting, and would find an affectionate, supportive note his wife Jeanene had slipped into the pages. Sometimes they were so tender he could hardly talk. He began to do the same, not realizing how much it truly meant to her. One day he took some of those little round paper circles that form when you punch holes in paper, and he wrote on them 1 to 100. He turned each over and wrote one word on each circle. He put them in an envelope thinking she'd get a good laugh. When she passed away, he found how much she appreciated the simple messages they shared with each other. She had carefully pasted each circle onto a piece of paper. She not only kept his notes, but protected them

with plastic coverings as if they were a valuable treasure.

We can show expressions of love by an act of service, making dinner, holding the door open, a phone call, a thoughtful text, a smile or a hug. Have a sense of humor and say, "I love you!"

I've always loved Valentine's Day. I remember cutting out little red hearts as a young girl and pasting them on white doilies then writing on them "I love you!" or "Will you be my Valentine?" and giving them to my parents, siblings and friends or some boy I had a crush on.

Valentine's Day is a celebration of love expressed to others—all kinds of love, from romantic love to friendship love to family love. It's the perfect day to acknowledge the love and appreciation you feel. Valentine's Day is a great annual reminder to put what you feel into words and share it with those you

love.

Here are a few ideas to express your love at home or with others:

- Write an old-fashioned love letter to someone you love. Write it on nice stationary, put it in an envelope and mail it. It doesn't have to be long but it will be so meaningful!
- Write little love notes, one per sticky note, and leave them in an easily found place in your home or at work. They can be simple and short: "You're awesome," "I love you," "You make me happy."
- Send a few friends or clients a quick note of appreciation and encouragement. Let them know how much they do to make your life happier or your workplace more successful. It's amazing how this will affect them.
- If you're on social media, find 10 friends you rarely communicate with and send them a thoughtful message about how much you appreciate them.
- Give your special someone their favorite treat, like chocolate chip cookies, cake, pie or chocolate dipped strawberries. Everyone loves a treat!



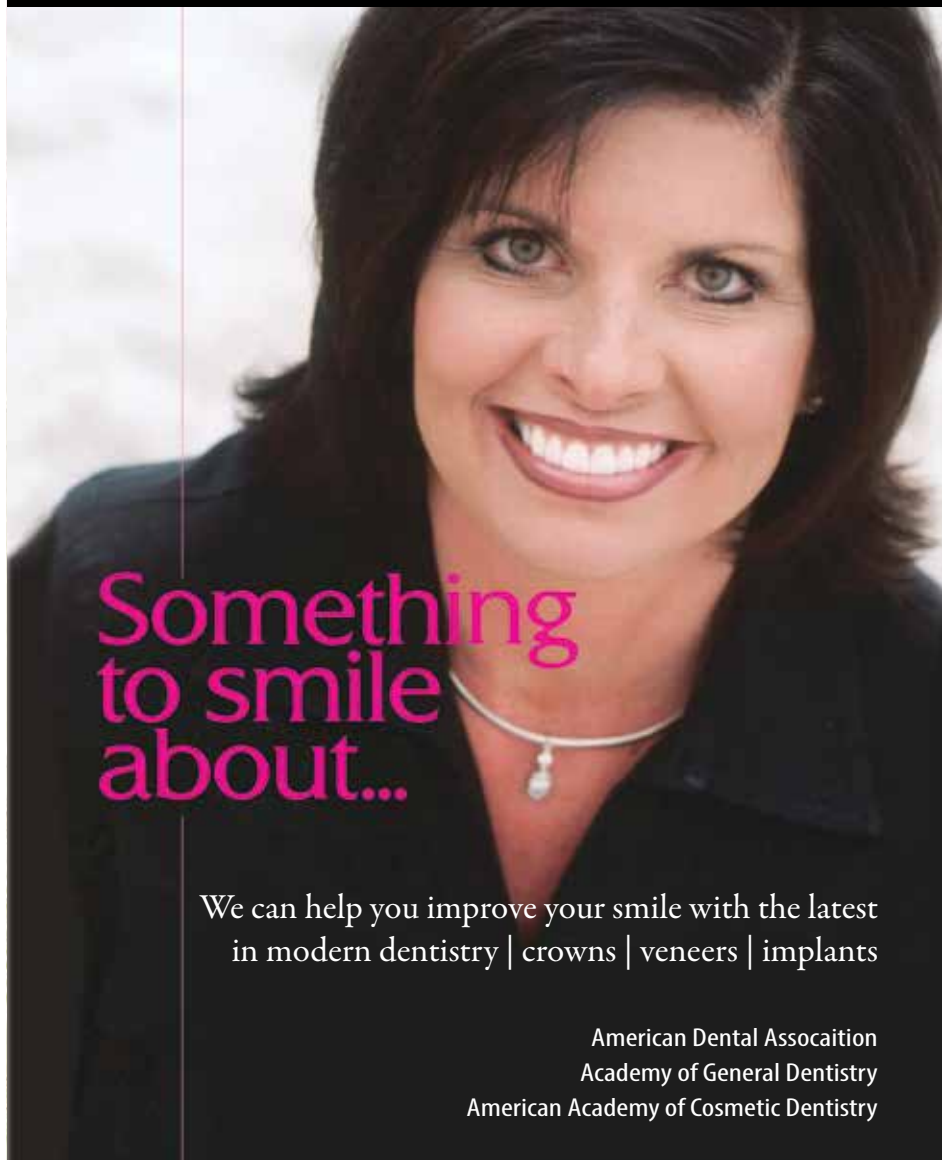
Photo by Aubry Startin Photography
Paul & Heather Sandstrom.

- Give them a big hug and tell them how much you love them and what you appreciate.
- Husbands, give your wife some flowers. Women love flowers and it means so much!
- Plan a fun activity together. Whether it's going out to dinner, a movie, riding bikes, hiking, swimming, skiing or a picnic. Spending time together is the key.
- Pick out your favorite song and listen to it. Hold hands!
- Punch out 20 circles and write 1 to 20 on the front. On the back, write a quality you love about them on each circle. They will love it!

You can do little things with great love. Have a Happy Valentine's Day!

Dr. Paul R. Sandstrom

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Sandstrom Family Weddings.

Photo courtesy Heather Sandstrom

Service Missionaries

Spreading The Gospel Through Acts Of Service

By Tony Gutiérrez

Samaritans weren't typical Jews when Jesus Christ walked in Israel. They had unique beliefs. Yet, the Good Samaritan that appears in Christ's parable didn't ask the victim on the side of the road his religious status before offering the care he needed. He just served.

"The Savior didn't just teach. He solidified his words by serving, so He didn't just serve the teaching mission, He served the service mission, too," said Sister Jaqlyn Shirts, a service missionary from Mesa. "I'm following His example."

Sister Shirts is among the growing number of young men and women who are assigned to service missions in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—from between 900–1,000 a year-and-a-half ago to approximately 1,450 today, says Elder Mark Pugmire. He, along with his wife, Sister Laurel Pugmire, serves as support adviser for the service missions in the North America Southwest Areas. Unlike proselyting missionaries, service missionaries are assigned to serve in the same region where they live, where they offer their time and talents to a handful of volunteer sites each week.

"It used to be that when a young man or woman who wanted to serve a mission but perhaps could not go away from home because of a physical disability [or] because of emotional or mental problems that would make it so that they could not leave home, they didn't get a chance to serve. The official title was 'honorably excused' from serving a mission," Sister Pugmire said. "Every young person—if you have a desire to serve your call to the work, that's what we believe, and that's what these wonderful young missionaries do, they serve."

Service missions began as a pilot program in a handful of jurisdictions under then-President Thomas S. Monson in 2014 as a way for those who were unable to complete a proselyting mission to still be able to give of themselves. The current First Presidency formally upgraded the program to be available throughout the U.S. and Canada beginning in 2019 and, more recently, throughout the world. As support advisers, the Pugmires oversee mission leaders in 29 missions, including seven in the Valley, in an area spanning Reno to Houston.

Sister Shirts had previously served



Photo by: Tony Gutiérrez

Elder Cooper Christensen teaches English as a Second Language to refugees at the Somali American United Council, Nov. 30, 2021.

as a proselyting missionary in California, beginning in July 2020. After dealing with depression and anxiety, she returned home to Mesa to get the help she needed. It was then her mother told her about the service missions.

"I was kind of upset about it, but after praying and fasting and coming to terms with that's what I needed. Knowing finishing my mission was an option by having a service mission, I was thrilled by that," Sister Shirts said. "I feel like that's one of the reasons why the Lord inspired His leaders to make this even possible to make a full-time service mission so that people who want to serve can serve no matter if they can go out and teach the Gospel or if they can serve to the best of their ability."

All missionary candidates apply the same way, Elder Pugmire said. If a candidate is dealing with physical, mental

or emotional health issues that require them to have medical attention accessible, for example, his or her stake president or bishop can note that in the application for consideration by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Some proselyting missionaries who return home early, either for personal reasons or because their mission locations cut down the number of missionaries allowed (as happened throughout the world during the COVID-19 pandemic), can also complete their mission assignment as service missionaries.

"Being at home serving takes a lot more discipline as far as the personal study and personal prayer goes, because when I get home from my service location, I don't have someone that's like, 'Hey, are you going to

Continued on pg. 20



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PREP YOUR MISSIONARY

This Is Your Year!

By Allison Beckert

When facing down the last semester of the school year before graduation, it's time to think seriously about mission preparation. This can apply to everyone considering Church service. When looking at the year before you, plan ahead to make your application and report for your call. There's a lot to get done! While months can feel long, they'll go quickly without keeping an eye on the several things left to do.

Start conversations now, if you haven't already, with your bishop. As your direct support and primary resource, bishops have access to specific answers related to your preparation and call. Bring your questions and concerns to him and listen when he recommends opportunities to serve the ward and practice your talents. When in the field or on a local assignment, service is at the center of your role. Until you report officially, you serve your ward.

Collect your current medical paperwork and set appointments with your doctor. Non-emergency appointments can take longer than emergencies, so schedule as early as you can when you know what you need. If it's been a while since your last check up, or you're between regular doctors, bring this up with your bishop or stake support system. There are often some doctors bishops or friends can recommend who are used to doing missionary screenings and vaccinations.

Establish good habits now. Once you've reported for training or to the field, there's not a lot of room to acclimate. It's go time! One area to look at is health habits. Most full-time missions demand more physically than most people are used to. Build up your daily exercise with the help and advice of your doctor. While schedules are now more flexible, a full day is important, so pay attention to your sleeping habits and work on that "early to bed and early to rise" mentality! Mental health is important too, so moderate social media and internet use more toward proactive, productive study.

Finally, a full-time missionary is a teacher, whether in lessons or in example. A mission isn't a learning ground for you, but a place to share your testimony and the power of the Gospel message. This is your prime time to immerse yourself in the scriptures. Build up your study habits and record the blessings you notice as you do this. Take time to do family history work, or help others with this project, so you can be familiar with the programs you'll be sharing with those curious about their family. Spend time with the ward and full-time missionaries. These are your people and no one will have better advice than these active servants of the Lord!

Photo by annpictures from Pixabay

Time is of the essence when preparing for a mission.



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THE “PROOF” IS IN THE DOUGH MESA’S PROOF BREAD

By Tony Gutiérrez

When Jonathan Przybyl and his wife Amanda Abou-Eid purchased Proof Bread four years ago, they operated out of their garage and a few farmers’ markets. Now, in addition to running a commercial bakery in downtown Mesa, they also found a way to offer a week-long venue for fellow farmers’ market vendors.

Main Street Harvest started when the couple needed a way to help support its move from their garage to the downtown location. With vendors they’d built relationships over the years, Przybyl and Abou-Eid opened the store which sells—among other things—fresh produce, homemade soup and no-waste soap and cleaning supplies provided by Desert Refillery that allows customers to refill their own containers and pay by the ounce. The vendors keep the majority of profits when their own products sell.

“Because we participate in all the farmers’ markets around the Valley, we have a large network of local food producers that we’ve built relationships with. These are people [who] over time we’ve pitched each other’s tents for each other. We’ve run each other’s booths. We work as a small community together every week,” said Przybyl.

“Our goal here is to be, in many ways, a retail incubator for other young businesses that, like us, started from humble beginnings,” he added.

Przybyl and Abou-Eid have also collaborated with Local First Arizona to allow vendors that use



Photo by Tony Gutiérrez

Jonathan Przybyl rolls pumpkin pie croissants at Main Street Bakery.

its commissary kitchen a place to sell their products. One vendor, Kevin Hackett, grows vegetables to be sold at the market, and has recently started working as a clerk. An avid gardener, Hackett has several garden beds outside his Mesa home and produces 70 percent of what he consumes.

“It’s nice to meet and see the faces of the people



Photo by Tony Gutiérrez

Husband Jonathan Przybyl and wife Amanda Abou-Eid, co-owners of Proof Bread and Main Street Harvest.

that you’re feeding. It’s an amazing sense of community when you get to actually shake hands, and then you get to hear how much they enjoyed it when they come back in,” he said. “It’s a good fit. I love the people down here. We’re all kind of artists that are wanting a sense of community. We want things to be more local. We’re very passionate about it, very organic.”

The artisan bread baked at Proof is an old-world style sourdough that does not use commercial yeast. As a result, the dough ferments and takes several days before it can be turned into bread. They use local ingredients as much as possible.

Przybyl and Abou-Eid are both second-generation Americans—Przybyl was born in Chicago to Polish immigrant parents, and Abou-Eid in Pennsylvania to Lebanese immigrants. Though they come from cultures that aren’t typically associated with each other, they both value family and food. Abou-Eid remembers helping her mother prepare food to sell at local farmers’ markets.

“We were both very heavily involved in the kitchen. I grew up in my mom’s kitchen, helping my mom, watching her cook,” Abou-Eid said.

After purchasing the bakery and learning the skill from Allen, the couple worked out of their garage with their two daughters, Amara and Keira. Following their parents’ entrepreneurial spirit, Amara makes and sells her own cookies with ingredients she buys herself, while Keira helps work the register at Main Street Harvest.

“We wanted to make sure our kids were aware and involved as much as they could be,” Abou-Eid said. “It’s been hard to strike a balance, but it’s a good platform for them to be able to learn how to be independent, how to handle money, how to balance expenses with profits. Everything is what you make out of it, so, we’re trying to use this opportunity as a learning opportunity for them.”

“We opened this as an Arizona grocery store, meaning all the groceries in here are produced here in Arizona by our community. We wanted to let the city know that our business is actually really a collection of the local economy,” Przybyl said. “From day one we’ve been building inroads with other local food producers, and now, Main Street Harvest serves as one of the only weeklong local farmers’ markets that you can go to any day of the week and shop for local food.”

Proof Bread is located at Main Street Harvest, A Community Grocer: 121 W Main Street, Mesa AZ 85201

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Come Follow Me

By Robin Finlinson

This original song by Robin Finlinson supports the readings assigned in the manual titled *Come, Follow Me—For Individuals and Families* for January and February, 2022. The readings include the books of Moses and Abraham in *The Pearl of Great Price*, and much of Genesis in the Old Testament of the Bible.

SONG: “Tell Me, Lord, of Thy Creation”

The prophet Moses avidly sought to know of the beginning of the world and its first inhabitants, how the earth was made, its purpose, and what work the Lord would ask of him specifically, though he was one of seemingly innumerable inhabitants. (See the first chapter of Moses.) Though the Lord is glorious beyond our eyes’ ability to behold Him unless transfigured as Moses was, He is a loving Father who delights in teaching each of His children all that we are ready to receive. Like Moses, we too may ask these things of God. Reading sacred writings delivered to us by the prophets is another significant way the Lord pours out vast knowledge upon us.

Tell Me, Lord, of Thy Creation

Music & text by Robin Finlinson

$\text{♩} = 100$

mp Tell me, Lord, of thy cre - a - tion when life on earth be - gan to be.

Help me un - der-stand its pur - pose and the work thou hast de-signed for me.

mf Teach me of thy ho - ly priest-hood. Let me glimpse e - ter - ni - ty.

Mar - vel - ing at all thy good - ness I hum - bly seek Thee. *pp*

In the Driver's Seat

LeSueur Car Company's Warren LeSueur

By Emily Jex Boyle

Since 2016, cancer has visited Warren LeSueur three times. He admits his uninvited guest is nonetheless a great teacher. When asked about his cancer journey, he begins with the birth of his quest for knowledge, explaining that during his sophomore year in 1964, he was kicked out of Scottsdale High School for having long hair. Subsequently, he moved to Hawaii and worked, later returning to Arizona to work with Janis Joplin, Jose Feliciano, and Grand Funk Railroad.

When Warren learned a coworker and friend had a degree in psychology from Notre Dame, Warren asked why he worked in that industry. "I'm an intellectual," his friend replied. "I like to read." Watching someone value everyday work and intellectualism impressed Warren, so he went to college, graduating with a BS degree in business administration and double minor in philosophy and psychology.

Warren has been listening to lectures and podcasts for nearly twenty years; he also reads medical journals.

When diagnosed with prostate cancer, Warren followed his typical lifestyle pattern: learn about things that you know little about. He traveled to California twice for an imaging method known as PSMA PET-CT as well as pencil proton treatment. In his opinion, it's like "sniper fire" to cancer. In 2021, when imaging indicated cancer in the spine, Warren traveled to Austria for nuclear medicine three times in three months. For him, traveling is important to find optimal life-saving care.

In Warren's library is a book by Dale E. Bredeson, *The End of Alzheimer's*. In it, Bredeson uses a metaphor of 32 holes in a leaky roof: "Try 32 different ways to [patch holes] which might help." For example, Warren explains, "diet, exercise, supplements can aid in your recovery. The universal tool for any or most diseases is the Word of Wisdom," he maintains.

A successful used car dealer, Warren embraces not only the precious roles of husband, father and grandfather but also that of an avid learner and researcher, particularly for his health. He is also a ward missionary, cancer coach and prison mentor.

"I read all the time," he says. "I read a book and I change my lifestyle. I like sharing what I know."

In 1975, newlyweds Warren and Carolyn each brought \$1,000 to the union. They started up a used car dealership together, the LeSueur Car



Photo by Carolyn LeSueur

Warren (pictured here with his wife, Carolyn) embraces not only the precious roles of husband, father and grandfather but also that of an avid learner and researcher, particularly for his health. After Warren's last PSMA scan, results recorded that he was negative for disease.



Photo by Carolyn LeSueur

46 years later, with nearly 20 grandchildren, the LeSueur family business is located on the same lot and still going strong. Of his children, Warren says, "They've grown up with this; they've learned good values and turned out well. The Lord blessed us with good kids and a good business."

Company. As the family grew, Warren bought cars with cash in the morning and Carolyn, at times with child, sold the cars on the lot later that day. For 46 years, they've run a successful dealership, taking care of cars and customers. With nearly 20 grandchildren, the family business is on the same lot and still going strong. Of his children Warren says, "They've grown up with this; they've learned good values and turned out well. The Lord blessed us with good kids and a good business."

Sir Roger Bannister, the first athlete to run a mile under four minutes, once wrote, "The man who can drive himself further once the effort gets painful is the man who will win." As Warren can attest, discovering a teacher in your adversity opens doors of knowledge and opportunity.

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Service Missionaries Continued from pg. 15

do your studies today?' It's up to me whether I'm going to be the one to study, said Elder Cooper Christensen from Mesa.

Elder Christensen began a proselytizing mission in Chicago just before the pandemic hit in 2020. After being sent home for a time, he returned to Chicago but found himself struggling. His companion mentioned the service mission option, and, after speaking with his mission president, he returned to Mesa to finish his mission as a service missionary. "In the Church, a mission is a mission is a mission. It doesn't matter whether you're serving in Africa or if you're serving in Gilbert, Arizona, it's a mission," he added. "I felt good moving forward that I was finishing my service, and it was just going to be in Arizona. And I've loved it."

What's Cooking?

By Rachael Fuller

THE BEST EASY TACOS EVER!

It's dark and cold outside. All you want to do is go back to bed but first, questions must be answered. Perhaps the most important question, at least in my house, is this: "Mom! What's for dinner?" This question, asked every day (sometimes multiple times a day), can cause me to go into a rage and sometimes I just want to curl into a ball and cry. On those days I turn to the easy, the old reliable—the crockpot. In these times of woe and tiredness, I whip up one of our favorite things: the mighty taco! This dish is our go-to for chicken tacos. This recipe is a copy-cat of the bestselling dish from a restaurant that rhymes with Rafe Cio. The chicken is super easy and can be used in tacos, enchiladas, nachos, burritos or quesadillas. Please enjoy, and keep the dinner woes away!



“Rafe Cio” Chicken Tacos

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 lbs boneless chicken breast
- 1 packet of ranch dressing mix
- ½ cup water
- ½ bottle of zesty Italian dressing
- ½ tbs of minced garlic
- ½ tbs of cumin
- ½ tbs of chili powder

-
- Tortillas or taco shells
 - Your favorite taco toppings

DIRECTIONS:

STEP 1: Combine ranch dressing mix and water in a bowl. Use a bowl big enough to hold everything but the chicken. Then add the Italian dressing, the garlic, cumin and chili powder to the bowl and stir to combine.

STEP 2: Place the chicken in the crockpot and carefully pour the seasoning mixture over the meat. Place the lid on the crockpot and cook for 8 hours on low or 4 to 6 hours on high.

STEP 3: Once done cooking remove chicken and shred. Place the shredded chicken back in the crockpot with all the liquid. Let it sit on warm for 15 minutes. Finally, eat and enjoy!



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Beehive BOOK REVIEW

By Cindy R Williams

Albert M. Pooley's recently released *Restoring Family Unity: The Pathway to Building Strong Family Relationships* brings families back together. Pooley is the founder and president of the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association.

Pooley has been teaching Native American fathers and mothers these messages since 2002. This book and program includes "culture and perspective which follows the manner and stories of the Native Americans."

The book covers five core principles that build upon each other to strengthen family relations and create a "happy and safe family." These core principles are creator, choice, teachable, wisdom and service.

Pooley tells the story of Admiral



Photo courtesy Native American Fatherhood & Families Association

Author Albert M. Pooley helps bring families together in his new book.

Robert Peary, considered the first man to reach the North Pole in 1909. He and his men worked hard all day to travel through the freezing and severe conditions. That evening, upon checking their progress, Peary found they were actually even farther away from the North Pole than when they started. He soon realized they were on an iceberg, floating south on the ocean currents. He knew they must get off the iceberg in order to reach their goal.

Pooley uses this story to illustrate how people must realize that it is imperative for them to get "off the iceberg" in order to reach their goals. Although the tribal communities have made progress with their own schools, health clinics, paved roads, and electricity, etc., they are also plagued with higher crime, school dropouts, drug abuse, alcoholism and teen pregnancies.

"The answer is not increasing social programs and courts, or building bigger jails," according to Pooley. "The answer is that parents are responsible for leading the way toward solutions that ultimately move our people off this iceberg. This is best accomplished by both parents being responsibly present in the lives of their children and taking responsibility for understanding the needs of their families and communities."

Pooley says he "appreciates the role of being a father and finds joy in teaching principles that are relevant to [his] Native American culture." He grew up on the reservation where "the love of a father taught him outstanding life lessons."

His book is available at www.nativeamericanfathers.org and on Amazon.



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FamilySearch & Ancestry Catalogs

By Glen K. Tolman

When collecting family history information from historical records, remember the FamilySearch Catalog and the Ancestry Card Catalog.

Ancestry lists 33,097 different record collections in their Card Catalog. See the list of these record collections by accessing ancestry.com. First, select “Search” and then “Card Catalog.” The An-

suggestions given by FamilySearch: “Start with a broad search. You do not have to enter information in all search parameter fields. In fact, you often get better results when you leave most of them blank. Expect records and indexes to contain errors, spell-

Catalog.” A search method that will normally yield results is to use “Place” and then “Keyword.” For example, when searching by place “Mesa, Arizona,” the place search is updated to include country and state. Entering a keyword “temple” lists four lines of results. Under the line “History” is listed a 226-page article about the dedication of the Mesa Temple in 1927 that can be read online.

One of the enjoyable parts of family history is finding family members on historical records. Remember that the Ancestry Card Catalog and FamilySearch Catalog are useful tools to remember and learn to use. In-person family history classes are now available at the Mesa Temple Visitors’ Center.

Visit the website MesaTemple.org/classes/ for the class schedule.



Photo by Christian Storb

Find more historical records about your ancestors.

cestry record collections are divided into eleven categories, including “Birth, Marriage & Death,” “Census & Voter Lists,” “Court, Land, Wills & Financials” and “Immigration & Emigration.” The record collections can be filtered by location (continent, country and state/province) and by date.

One interesting category is “Pictures,” which includes U.S. School Yearbooks 1900-1999, containing 737,168,886 records. Not all the yearbooks are indexed by individual names, but specific yearbooks are organized by state, city, school and year. For example, Westwood High (Mesa, Arizona) yearbooks are available to view from 1963 to 1997.

FamilySearch contains 3,051 record collections—not nearly as many as Ancestry, but not included are all the records accessible through the FamilySearch Catalog. See the list of these Record Collections from familysearch.org. First, select “Search” and then the “Records” option. Listed is an option titled “Browse All Collections.” Similar to Ancestry, there are eleven categories, including “Birth, Marriage, & Death,” “Censuses & Lists,” “Migration & Naturalization,” “Probate & Court” and “Military.”

If a search on Ancestry.com or FamilySearch.org is not producing desired results, limit your search to a type of record or a specific record collection. Read the information on the first page of the “Search” option on FamilySearch titled “Tips for Effective Searches.” Here are two

ing variations, and estimations.”

If you know an ancestor was alive in 1940 and you are not finding them on the 1940 census, limit the search to only the 1940 Census and try different combinations, such as first name only and birth year. The “Search” on FamilySearch includes the option “Type,” which limits the search to one or more of the eight record types listed. The “Search” on Ancestry.com lists the types of records to include on the right side of the page in the area titled “Explore by Collection.”

The FamilySearch Catalog provides access to genealogical materials (including books, online materials, microfilm, microfiche and publications) made available by FamilySearch online and in libraries and centers worldwide: “The Catalog is a guide to birth, marriage and death records; census records; church registers; books; periodicals; family histories and many other records that contain genealogical information. These records may be searchable online, on microfiche or microfilm, in a book or in a computer file.”

FamilySearch advises, “Some entries in the FamilySearch Catalog include images of records. When an image is available in the catalog, a camera icon will appear to the right of the microfilm note associated with that image.”

To learn more about using the FamilySearch Catalog, go the FamilySearch.org and find the “Catalog” under the “Search” option. You will see an option “Learn more about the catalog and how to access materials.” This will take you to the Research Wiki to a section titled “Introduction to the FamilySearch

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Local Mayors and charitable organization leaders cut the ribbon, officially opening Giving Machines 2021.

Photo by Robin Finlinson

Light THE World Giving Machines Return to Arizona for 3rd Season

By Emily Jex Boyle

In November, Valley-wide city officials and heads of local charitable organizations gathered at the Gilbert Water Tower Plaza to celebrate the unwrapping of the popular Giving Machines for the 2021 holiday season. Weeks earlier, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints announced its annual Light the World Christmas initiative with the theme “Light the World with Love.”

For a third year, Giving Machines were available in ten cities across the United States during the season, offering people a vending machine-style opportunity to donate to local and global charities. Full-time missionaries of the Gilbert Arizona Mission volunteered at the locations.

Pleased to welcome the Giving Machines back to Downtown Gilbert, Mayor Brigitte Peterson points out, “Typically a vending machine doesn’t offer things that are very good for you.

These vending machines offer you the opportunity to come, give of your heart and to feed your own soul.”

Leaders from local charitable organizations like A New Leaf, AZ Brain Food, Catholic Charities Community Services, Child Crisis Arizona, St. Mary’s Food Bank and United Food Bank attended.

In 2019, the effort raised over 6.2 million dollars, \$1.1 million in Arizona.

“It’s a wonderful day to come together as a community of towns, cities, donors, corporations, individuals.” expresses Torrie Taj, CEO of Child Crisis Arizona.

“In all the darkness, the light is going to shine brighter this year.” says Malissa Geer, Director of Community and Faith Engagement of Catholic Charities Community Services.

Reminded of the widow’s mite, Dave Richins, CEO of United Food



Photo by Robin Finlinson

The First Donation: The first Giving Machine 2021 donation made by local mayors.

Bank adds, “I think of people who are going to come here and donate a dollar or two, or five or ten..I really want to thank them because that collectively is what made those 1.2 million meals possible [in 2019].”

Elder Jonathan S. Schmitt, Area Seventy of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, explains, “This really is an amazing opportunity to positively impact and bless the lives of thousands here in Arizona and across

the globe.” Speaking of the Church’s charitable partners, Schmitt continues, “We are thankful to be linked arm and arm in this effort.”

One hundred percent of the donations accounted for by the Giving Machines go to each charity and will be used for the purchased items.

Offering a blessing on the Giving Machines in her third year with the program, Sister Betty Benjamin Banja of Catholic Charities teaches, “God says, ‘Let there be light.’ And there was light. God is a God of Light in a world darkened by hatred, violence, greed and poverty. We are chosen today to take this light and shine it in the darkness. Different communities come together with love to love those who want to be loved.”

Elder Schmitt extended an invitation to all, saying, “We invite you to Light the World with Love this Christmas season. We invite you to invite your friends, neighbors, coworkers, everyone to come. Here, we’re able to purchase items that will benefit those whom Jesus served in His life, those who were marginalized, those who were outcast, poor and needy.”

Visit www.LightTheWorld.org for more information.



Photo by Robin Finlinson

The leaders of the 6 beneficiary charities take part in Giving Machine media day.



Photo by Robin Finlinson

Sister Betty Banja of the St. James Roman Catholic Church offers prayer, song and poetry.



Put Your Shoulder To The Wheel

By A New Leaf

Church Members Lend A Helping Hand To A New Leaf



Countless families across the Valley have been facing crisis situations over the past two years, and due to the pandemic, our community has not been able to come together in person to help. For the longest time, we have not been able to roll up our sleeves and get into the gritty work needed to make an impact in our local community. But this past October a remarkable group of volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stepped up, and safely returned to in-person service.

On the morning of October 30th,

2021, over 275 volunteers from the Salt River Stake in Mesa, Arizona showed up at A New Leaf's community programs campus to volunteer their labor in service to those in need. Led by Alison Bench and Sarah Holt, this group of volunteers stepped up to paint, build, and renovate an entire program location that serves children with behavioral health challenges, children in the foster care system, refugee children, and more.

These volunteers laid new concrete, painted murals, renovated entire buildings, washed cars, and more. They put hard work into a full 4-hour event that

left the community programs campus looking brand new and ready to serve thousands more children in need. This remarkable effort will allow A New Leaf to continue providing top-quality services for years to come.

"The generosity shown by the people that showed up to make this project happen is simply beyond description," says Joe Dulin, Chief Philanthropy Officer at A New Leaf. "We are so thankful to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and to their leaders who have always worked with A New Leaf to help those most in need in our

community."

Incredibly, these volunteers paid for all the supplies and materials for the project, donating the equivalent of nearly \$40,000 towards improvements. When combined with the time and talents of all the volunteers, this project represents the largest A New Leaf volunteer project in the East Valley in 2021. This is an incredible achievement that represents how much the Salt River Stake, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a whole, truly care about their local community.



All photos courtesy of A New Leaf

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LightTheWorld



a new leaf

Your time, love, and resources made this year's **Light The World** campaign a huge success, with a generous portion of the proceeds of this remarkable event being donated to A New Leaf.

Thanks to you, thousands of families facing homelessness, domestic violence, poverty, hunger, and other crisis situations will find the help they need to get back on their feet.

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VALLEY TEMPLE SCHEDULES

**Gilbert Arizona, Mesa
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TEMPLES OPEN FOR ALL LIVING ORDINANCES AND LIMITED PROXY ORDINANCES—Based on First Presidency direction, the above temples have resumed limited operations. At this time, all living ordinances and limited proxy ordinances are being performed. All ordinances will be performed by appointment only and proxy ordinances may be limited to members residing in this designated temple district. For these ordinances, the temple will have reduced staff and the number of guests may be limited. To schedule an appointment, please click the appointment link below. If you are unable to use the online scheduling system, please contact the temple. Temples may only have limited clothing available, so patrons are encouraged to bring their own temple clothing. Patron housing and cafeteria services may be open but with limited services. All government guidelines will be observed, including regulations related to travel, gatherings, sanitization, and safety. Please contact the temple for more information.

Gilbert Arizona Temple

3301 S. Greenfield Rd, Gilbert, AZ, 85297
(480) 822-5000

2022 Temple Closures

Monday, 28 Mar 2022 - Monday, 11 Apr 2022
Saturday, 1 Oct 2022
Monday, 3 Oct 2022 - Monday, 17 Oct 2022
Wednesday, 23 Nov 2022 - Thursday, 24 Nov 2022
Saturday, 24 Dec 2022
Saturday, 31 Dec 2022

Please check <https://www.churchofjesus-christ.org/temples> regularly for updates.

Mesa Arizona Temple

101 S. LeSueur, Mesa, AZ, 852014
(480) 833-1211

2022 Temple Closures

Saturday, 2 Apr 2022
Tuesday, 5 Apr 2022 - Sat, 16 Apr 2022 (Limited)
Monday, 18 Jul 2022 - Monday, 1 Aug 2022
Saturday, 1 Oct 2022
Wednesday, 23 Nov 2022 (Limited)
Thursday, 24 Nov 2022
Saturday, 24 Dec 2022

Please check <https://www.churchofjesus-christ.org/temples> regularly for updates.

Phoenix Arizona Temple

5220 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Phoenix, AZ 85310
(623) 474-9500

2022 Temple Closures

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Thursday, 24 Nov 2022
Saturday, 24 Dec 2022
Saturday, 31 Dec 2022 (Limited)

Please check <https://www.churchofjesus-christ.org/temples> regularly for updates.



JUSTSERVE

By Hillary Jade Fevrier

The Welcome to Arizona Project

Bringing New Life to Christ's Teachings

Refuge is defined as “a condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or trouble.”

Most people who read this article will read it from a place of refuge. While newscasts are overflowing with broadcasts of turmoil, violence and unrest the world over, it's hard not to think about our brothers and sisters living in those realities; those who want nothing more than the safety and shelter that we enjoy every day.

It's no secret that the number of refugees entering the United States has increased recently. More than 5000 refugees will arrive in Arizona this year, from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Syria, Eritrea and other parts of the world, and one local organization will be there to welcome them. The Welcome to Arizona Project lives up to its name: volunteers welcome refugees from all over the world, assisting them with critical resources and helping with faster, fuller integration into their new surroundings.

In 2001, the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center changed our nation in many ways. One of the families affected by the crisis was the Manning family. They decided to change the loss of their brother, Terrence, into something positive. Their tribute started as donating supplies and clothing to a refugee family from Afghanistan as a symbol of peace between countries that have often been seen as enemies. What



Photo courtesy of The Welcome to Arizona Project

The Welcome to Arizona Project has been serving displaced families since 2021.

it turned into was a nonprofit organization that serves thousands of displaced individuals every year.

There are plenty of ways to make an impact with The Welcome to Arizona Project. Volunteering of time or financial/ gift card donations are always welcome. Those who choose to give time can expect to help in one (or more) of four ways: Saturday morning welcomes, bike repair, sorting/ organizing donations, or the mobile clothing closet distributions. For more details and additional ways to get involved with this

incredible organization, visit wtap.org.

Volunteers often receive their assignments thinking they are coming to be an inspiration or help to the refugees, but as The Welcome to Arizona Project agency director, Mike Sullivan says, volunteers are often the ones who come away most impacted. They are “humbled by refugees’ perspectives, resilience, optimism, faith, and spirit to push on.” Another element of The Welcome to Arizona Project that makes it special is the enthusiasm of those who receive assistance to then come back and volunteer. Once they are integrated and self-sufficient, many newly settled refugees become volunteers for the next wave of those in need.

Director Sullivan says, “The only difference between refugees and us is circumstance.” It's almost unimaginable to consider the fear and complexity of becoming a refugee, yet for some it's the only way to survive. The Welcome to Arizona Project helps refugees feel welcome in their new community. More importantly, it helps us take a look outside ourselves and see where we could bring relief to suffering in Christlike service unto some of the least of these, our brothers and sisters from around the world.

For more information, please visit wtap.org.



Photo courtesy of The Welcome to Arizona Project

Volunteers and refugees alike find joy in The Welcome to Arizona Project.